

Running head: IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

Identifying Potential Marketing Strategies that Support the Renewal of a Tax Based Referendum
for the City of Rialto

Executive Development

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Appendices C through E Not Included. Please visit the Learning Resource Center on the Web at <http://www.lrc.dhs.gov/> to learn how to obtain this report in its entirety through Interlibrary Loan.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed:_____

ABSTRACT

The problem was that the City of Rialto does not have a specific marketing plan in place for the renewal of its Utility Users Tax, which will sunset in June 2008. The purpose of this project was to potentially identify strategies to ensure the successful renewal of this measure.

Descriptive research methodology was used with feedback instruments that answered questions regarding marketing strategies in Rialto's 2003 Special Election, other California cities and fire departments, why Rialto citizens voted the way they did and what would encourage them to vote favorably for a renewal referendum.

Procedures included a comprehensive literature review, personal interviews and feedback questionnaires.

The results produced positive outcomes and established the need for future research to identify affected stakeholders.

Recommendations regarding civic and media involvement, stakeholder identification and government accountability were made as integral components of a successful community campaign and partnership.

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INTRODUCTION

The old adage of fire departments will always be funded is no longer an accepted concept for Fire Chiefs and municipal leaders, alike. Shrinking resources, state takeaways and public expectations force governing officials to develop and implement new and creative ways to finance vital city services.

In June 2003, the City of Rialto, California voters narrowly passed a Utility Users Tax (UUT) by five votes. This referendum will sunset and expire in June 2008. If the referendum fails when it returns to the voters, the potential loss of revenue may result in the closing of Rialto's Fire Station 204.

The City of Rialto used an outside consultant to develop and implement a marketing plan for the 2003 initiative. Positively marketing a renewal referendum is critical to ensure continued funding for the fire department and other vital city services. The problem is that the City of Rialto currently does not have a marketing plan in place for the renewal. The purpose of this Applied Research Project is to identify potential marketing strategies to ensure successful passage of the Rialto UUT by the voters.

Descriptive research methodology with the use of feedback instruments from the Rialto citizens, California cities and fire departments was used to answer the following questions:

1. What marketing techniques were used in the 2003 election by the City of Rialto?
2. To what extent have other fire departments in California developed strategies to support a tax-based initiative?
3. To what extent have other cities in California developed strategies to support a tax-based initiative?
4. Why did Rialto citizens vote the way they did on Measures J and K in 2003?

5. What would encourage Rialto citizens to vote yes on the ballot renewal in June 2008?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

For over twenty-five years, California cities have lost considerable control over their major resources to fund vital services such as police protection, fire and medical services and public works. With the exception of California, dependence on property tax as a mainstay funding source for local governments remains the practice in most states of the nation today (Coleman, 2005). Proposition 13, the taxpayer revolt of 1978, has inflicted lasting effects onto municipalities of California. It basically destroyed any local control with regard to the property tax. This initiative, which was created by Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann, not only cut California's property taxes by 30%, but also capped the rate for future tax increases. Decreasing revenue was further aggravated when voters approved other California measures including Propositions 62 and 218 in 1996. Proposition 218 called for voter approval for all taxes and charges on property owners. More than 70% of a city's current revenue is either restricted or controlled by state mandates. With the constant threat of unilateral state revenue takeaways, managing a city's fiscal health becomes a daunting challenge, despite best efforts to manage affairs in a fiscally prudent manner (Coleman).

As population increases, demands for services are also increasing. Revenue needed to support the services for these demands is not increasing. In fact, unfounded state and federal government mandates coupled with new judicial interpretations of existing statutes have diminished local control over how revenue is spent. The erosion of local control has inhibited municipal ability to adequately respond to its priorities and needs.

As with other California cities, Rialto struggled with each of these difficult financial situations as they developed. Starting with the early 1980s, Rialto lost revenue to state budget

grabs such as vehicle license fees (VLF), business inventory exemption reimbursements, bank in-lieu subventions, liquor license subventions and highway carriers' subventions. In the 1990s, the City of Rialto continued to lose local revenue to the State of California via booking fees, cigarette tax subventions, property tax administration fees and the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF).

In 1992, California legislators enacted Proposition 98 that shifted partial financial responsibility for funding education from the state to local governments, such as cities, counties and special districts. This shifted the allocation of local property tax revenues from the cities to the ERAF to support schools. Even though California cities only bore 16% of the transfer, collectively they were responsible for \$5.2 billion in fiscal year 2003-04 and over \$44 billion since its inception in 1992. According to an analysis conducted by Coleman Advisory Services, the estimated loss in ERAF dollars to the City of Rialto from 1992 to 2004 was \$17,203,303 (City of Rialto, 2004, p. 4).

Most recently, the Governor of California proposed that cities, counties and special districts make a two-year contribution of \$1.3 billion per year to help solve the state's budget deficit. Rialto's contribution is \$745,156 per year. Even though the League of California Cities endorses this state constitutional amendment, it is each city's obligation to contribute their portion for the next two years – including Rialto.

In a personal interview with Rialto's Assistant City Administrator, Kirby Warner, he illustrated a historical perspective regarding the City's finances. Deficit spending, deficit fund balances in the Internal Services Fund, Gas Tax, and Rialto's Airport were large contributors to the shortfall (K. Warner, personal communication, March 14, 2005).

Strict budget control measures were initiated and department heads were required to make cuts, including personnel. Forty personnel positions were eliminated, including 19 positions from police and fire. The effects of the budget crisis compounded within the fire department. In 2000 and 2001, Fire Station No. 204 was closed intermittently dependent on daily personnel staffing. In the first 6 months of 2002, the station was completely closed. Because Rialto had neither capital reserves in place, nor a Capital Replacement Plan, when the City's 1982 aerial ladder truck failed its annual certification and was cost-prohibitive to repair, the City was forced to close its only truck company.

With a closed station and unstaffed apparatus, incident response times increased. The department attempted to control the response times by closely monitoring reflex and driving times to the scene. However, the number of incidents also increased every year, thus making it more difficult to meet acceptable response times. In 2000, the number of incidents was 8,036 and in 2002, that number rose to 8,978.

As a result of personnel layoffs, there were less city employees in relation to the population of Rialto. In 1997, Rialto's population was 86,600 with 418 employees. At the height of the budget crisis in 2002, Rialto's population had increased to 94,778 with only 364 employees. Firefighter turnover was also at an all time department high; 43 personnel within 18 months left for higher paying jobs at other fire departments. The department's Assistant Fire Marshal and a clerical position were eliminated. By restructuring the department's command staff, a Division Chief was reclassified as a Battalion Chief. Each department was again asked to reduce its expenditures between 3% and 5% during the midyear review.

Inter-fund borrowing was also discontinued. A Working Capital Reserve, a Line of Credit and a Restricted Certificate of Deposit were created to address the cash flow issues in

2000. In 2001, the City created the Rialto Utility Authority and restructured the airport debt with sewer and water. With internal controls and council direction to stop deficit spending and inter-fund borrowing in all funds, the elimination of remaining deficit fund balances resulted by midyear of 2002, with the exception of the airport account. Later in 2002, a four million dollar reserve was recreated as short-term protection from identified state budget impacts. This allowed the elimination of the Line of Credit and the Certificate of Deposit for cash flow purposes in June of 2002.

Even though Rialto had made significant advancements toward improving its financial crisis, it had become apparent to city leaders that an on-going, locally controlled revenue stream needed to be created. Because of revenue shortfalls, both internally and with the state takeaways, Rialto created an identified funding source that could return the City solvency, rehire lost positions and address deteriorating capital projects.

A UUT in the form of a general tax was set before the voters in a special election in June of 2003. A general tax was sought for two reasons. First, a general tax only requires a simple majority plus one. This means that fifty percent of the tallied votes plus one more was needed for the measure to pass. Secondly, a public safety tax would have required a two-thirds vote in order to pass. City leaders strategized that the proposition was not as likely to succeed if it required a two-thirds approval as a specific safety tax.

The proposal was written as two separate measures. Measure J was an advisory vote that told the council how the tax revenue should be spent. City of Rialto Resolution No. 4988 appeared on the ballot in the following format:

Should the City give priority to funding the following services and programs:

Strengthening public safety and emergency preparedness by filling all vacant police and

fire positions and adding additional police and fire personnel; improving streets, access to City facilities for senior citizens and people with disabilities; after school programs and other vital city services; and maintaining adequate reserves to address catastrophic events?

Measure K was the enactment of the Utility Users Tax. It also appeared as City of Rialto Resolution No. 4988 on the ballot in the following format:

Shall Ordinance (Measure K) be adopted to adopt, for a period of five years only, a utility users tax of eight percent (8%) within the City of Rialto to fund such City general fund programs as police and fire protection, street maintenance, and park and recreation services and to authorize an exemption from that tax for low-income and senior-citizen households?

As presented in Measure K, a five-year sunset clause was created. This provision gave voters an assurance that the tax would expire unless it was renewed at the end of the five-year term.

Two exemptions were created in the propositions, as well. The senior citizen exemption (Appendix D) was created for any Rialto resident of 65 years or older. With a proof of age and residency, any senior that applied for exemption would be granted. As of March 2005, there are 1,973 senior citizen exemptions currently in effect. This provision exempts the seniors from the 8% tax on all of their utilities. The second exemption is for low-income households (Appendix E). There are currently 115 approved low-income exemptions. Again, with proof of residency and verification of income, any person that qualifies for this exemption is granted. The low-income requirement is developed annually and derived from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for San Bernardino County. The guidelines are on a sliding scale and range from \$19,000 for a single person household to \$29,300 for a five-person

household in 2004 (C. Roberts, personal communication, February 25, 2005). The UUT is 8% and is levied on all users of various utilities, both businesses and residents. Currently, there are 116 providers that are reporting taxes from telephone and cellular providers, gas and electric providers, water companies, cable and satellite providers (C. Roberts, personal communication, February 25, 2005).

Two other concerns that rose from the community were the City's Public Employee Retirement System Tax (PERS) and the Community Facilities District 87-2 Tax (CFD). In place since 1958, the PERS Tax was citywide and paid the retirements of city employees. The PERS Tax was increasingly becoming a concern for community activists and certain watchdog groups such as the Howard Jarvis Tax Association, who wanted to see the tax repealed (Peel, 2004). The CFD Tax was a designated geographical district that was specific to residents of Rialto that lived in the Las Colinas area. One obligation of the CFD Tax was to partly support the Fire and Police Substation in that district. However, the revenue collected from the CFD Tax fell short of providing sufficient funding for the Fire and Police Substation. Residents of the Las Colinas District became vocal regarding the viability of their station, especially during peaks of financial difficulties when the station was closed. The citizens did not understand that the CFD Tax was not sufficient to keep the station open; they merely knew they were taxed for a service that they did not receive. Therefore, another strategic component of the UUT was to eliminate both the PERS Tax and the CFD Tax.

Because the UUT is a general tax, it would benefit several city services through the General Fund. As noted earlier the intent of the UUT was to strengthen public safety and therefore, city leaders specifically wrote those concerns into the ballot measures. Knowing that public safety encompasses nearly 75% of the operating budget, policy was set by the City

Administrator to earmark 70% of the revenue generated from the UUT specifically for police and fire services.

Estimates that the UUT would generate 10 million dollars per year were based on all utilities, including a conservative estimate for cellular phone use. It was difficult for finance personnel to conceptualize true amounts because it was unclear exactly how many cell phones were in use in the City of Rialto. Based on this fact coupled with the city's inability to estimate exemptions, staff developed a net estimate of 8 million dollars into the General Fund for the UUT. With the fiscal year 2003/2004 ending, the UUT generated \$8,672,781 with a monthly average of \$800,313. For Fiscal Years 2004/2005 and 2005/2006, it is estimated that the UUT will generate \$9.8 million and \$10 million, respectively (J. Overholt, personal communication, March 3, 2005).

UUT objectives were developed, articulated and marketed to city employees, community leaders and targeted groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce and senior citizen communities.

The UUT objectives were:

- Eliminate General Fund structural deficit
- Eliminate PERS Tax and CFD 87-2 Tax assessment
- Increase public safety service levels
- Fund staffing and equipment needed to increase General Fund services, including park maintenance, code enforcement and senior center
- Address retention and attraction of employees
- Strengthen General Fund reserves

The election results were interesting, and partly, the premise for this paper. Of the 26,871 registered voters in the City of Rialto, only 3,377 voted in the special election on June 3,

2003. Only 12.5% of the registered voters actually voted in the election and of the 98,000 Rialto residents, only 3.4% voted. Staggering as these figures are, the results for each measure were even more perplexing. Measure J, the measure advising how to spend the tax, received 2,108 yes votes compared to 1,193 no votes. Measure K, the measure to impose the tax, was much closer. Yes votes equaled 1,649 and no votes equaled 1,644 – a mere five-vote margin. 3,301 citizens voted for Measure J, while 3293 citizens voted for Measure K. Eight people less voted for Measure K (Peel, 2004). This is another premise for this paper. One research question of this project is, “Why did Rialto citizens vote the way they did on Measures J and K in 2003?” This author attempted to answer this question through a citizen feedback instrument that was given to a variety of Rialto citizens.

The passing of the UUT on June 3, 2003, now represents 24% of the general fund budget. With the additional revenue from the UUT, the City has completed the following in the past year:

1. Eliminate the PERS and CFD Taxes
2. Add nine Firefighter/Paramedics
3. Add one Fire Battalion Chief
4. Add 10 Police Officers and 6 Law Enforcement Technicians
5. Add two Code Enforcement Officers and one Animal Control Officer
6. Partially fund one aerial ladder truck and one fire engine
7. Purchase two Police motorcycles
8. Add one Finance Revenue Coordinator
9. Add one Civil/Traffic Engineer
10. Add one Human Resource Assistant

11. Add three Maintenance Public Works positions
12. Approved budget for purchase of 24 new Police vehicles
13. Approved budget for purchase of two new Public Works vehicles
14. Purchased one additional Fire Engine
15. Improved benefit package for employee retention and attraction

As illustrated, the Rialto UUT has accomplished several of its outlined goals and objectives. Planning for the renewal of the UUT is important because of the critical need to continue the current level of services delivered to the community. Even though the list above appears to be large, two primary issues still remain. First, personnel levels as of March 2005 are at 406 employees, as compared to the 1997 level of 418. Secondly, vehicles and apparatus listed above are much needed replacement vehicles that were deferred until funding was identified. The UUT, at its current rate, has assisted in returning the City of Rialto to an appropriate level of service. If the UUT does not renew, the City would be faced with slipping back to its previous state of financial crisis. As noted, another financial disaster would lead to delayed replacement of broken equipment, closing of fire stations and personnel reductions. Because employee costs make up the majority of the operating expenses, layoffs would again be inevitable.

The critical need to renew the UUT truly rests with two special groups, the employees and the citizens it serves. The background presented here exemplifies the premise for this paper. Knowing why citizens voted the way they did and for what reason can help Rialto leaders better understand the decision making of each voter. This in turn could assist with future marketing strategies when the measure sunsets and the ballot renewal is presented back to the voters. Separate from this understanding is another issue addressed by this author.

Knowing how other municipalities developed marketing strategies and presented their issue to the voters could assist Rialto leaders with developing their strategies and presentation. “User charges are most appropriate when the service provided is easily identified and the amount of use can generate sufficient revenues” (Tischler, 1999). Through a personal interview, Rialto City Administrator Henry Garcia stated that he recognized both of these points. He spent considerable time presenting, explaining and convincing the employees and citizens, alike. During an interview on February 22, 2005, Mr. Garcia stated that the warm-up time was the time to build the team as he related how the Council and the citizens need the tax. “We must develop a psychological contract between the purpose of the UUT and the need for the UUT for all stakeholders of Rialto” (H. Garcia, personal communication, February 22, 2005). The significance of making that connection is the point of this paper and hopefully develops recommendations that will be useful in seeing the UUT renewed for the City of Rialto. The negative effect of Rialto stakeholders not making that connection could result in the UUT failing.

This Applied Research Project has a direct linkage to the following United States Fire Administration (USFA) Operational Objective: “to appropriately respond in a timely manner to emergent issues” (United States Fire Administration [USFA], 2004). As previously identified, response times increased when fire department units were closed. This also extended response times to critical medical aids and fire responses when units responded from other neighboring districts. Making the distinction that timely responses is a critical issue, Fire Chief Steve Wells developed measurable criteria when he established operational goals for the fire department when Measures J and K went into effect. When funding was established and units were restored as a direct result of UUT funding, the Fire Chief established new operational goals as tangible markers for response times.

This Applied Research Project also relates to the Executive Development course from the Executive Fire Officer Program in the following respect. One of the course goals is, “Develop and integrate change management and leadership techniques necessary in complex organizations” (FEMA, 2004). Recognizing the need for change leadership, the Executive Fire Officer Program teaches current and upcoming fire executives how to effect change in the twenty-first century. One method explored during Executive Development was transformational leadership. This style includes behaviors such as, intellectual growth, relationships and vision. This research project will study past practices and current trends. Developing a roadmap from this author’s recommendations for the renewal of Rialto’s UUT and set a vision for future researchers to develop a citywide marketing plan is the ultimate goal.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review was to collect and assess relevant and applicable information regarding marketing strategies for a tax-based referendum renewal, as well as, specifically review how other organizations and government entities developed marketing strategies for a tax renewal. This review establishes a foundation based in theory for this study. The literature review began at the Learning Resource Center while attending the Executive Development Course at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The review included published Executive Fire Officer Applied Research Projects, journal articles, periodicals, college textbooks, Internet searches, and other books made available through the libraries at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) and Crafton Hills College (CHC). Finally, two separate Feedback Instruments were used to question a variety of California cities and citizens of Rialto.

Over the years, many Applied Research Projects have studied strategic marketing of the fire service. The overall theme generated in each of these projects was to first identify the stakeholder and secondly, determine their needs (Burford, 2004; Johnston, 1998; Lange, 2001; Orchard, 2004). Much consideration by these authors was given to alternative funding sources. Discussion regarding referendums, user, development and impact fees has included the need to impose these revenue generators as alternative sources (Bertrand, 2000; Ennis, 2000; Intartaglio, 1999; Olson, 2002). After a comprehensive literature review, this author has attempted to blend an understanding of strategic marketing, identifying stakeholders and their needs with the passing of a renewal UUT and nexus between them.

As with many other states, Californians do not routinely support new tax-based referendums. The era of do more with less has been echoed by voters that do not want to be further taxed. Californians passed the \$2.1 billion Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air and Coastal Protection Act on March 7, 2000 by 63% of the vote. Prior to the passing of this bond measure, the last time voters in California passed a park bond measure was in 1988 (Kelly and Zieper, 2001). According to these authors, the success was attributed to six key strategies: capacity building, feasibility research, polling, measure design, campaigning and implementation.

The concept behind capacity building is to build a broad foundation of community-based leadership to assist with the proposed measure. Identifying a strong, local leadership within the community also opens doors for purposeful discussions surrounding the measure. In Monterey Park, California, difficulties occurred while generating community support because of language barriers and cultural differences. Recognizing that everyone is considered a stakeholder,

additional efforts were made to penetrate the various neighborhoods and develop partnerships within these cultures (Orchard, 2004).

The second and third strategies are feasibility research and polling. Relevant information is gathered for the purpose of informing the stakeholders. Polling respondents of community organizations and spokespeople helps determine beneficial outcomes. It also identifies negative and potential swing voters. This was the case with the California's Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond. Much time was spent polling perspective voters while providing positive reinforcement for the bond measure. Equally important is the need to identify voter priorities. This can suggest exactly how much a perspective voter is willing to pay to obtain their priorities. Such is the case with the Rialto UUT. During the feasibility research phase, neighboring cities were polled to determine high and low percentages based on their own specific percentage. Subsequently, potential voters were asked what they were willing to pay to ensure that public safety components remained in place for Rialto while concurrently marketing potential senior citizen and low-income exemptions (K. Warner, personal communication, March 14, 2005).

Measure design is not just developing the language of the ballot measure, but also explaining how the measure addresses and resolves the particular issue targeted. The language should also appeal to the voters, thus creating acceptance from the voters when they are casting their votes. In another case study, Dade County, Florida voters approved a \$200 million general tax measure to fund capital improvements at parks and recreational facilities. An alliance of business and civic leaders developed the Trust for Safe Neighborhood Parks (Kelly & Zieper, 2001). Born out of developing this trust of community individuals, the referendum addressed citizen concerns regarding the use of the funds, as well as growing concerns of government mismanagement of public funds (Kelly & Zieper). To appease this concern, the development of

a citizen's advisory committee was also established. Assistant City Administrator Kirby Warner stated during his personal interview that in order to combat the possibility of community mistrust, city personnel must be directly accountable to the citizens (K. Warner, personal communication, March 14, 2005). This was also the case with the development of a budget advisory committee in Rialto.

Campaigning is often viewed as the most labor intensive and time consuming; however if capacity building, feasibility research, polling and measure design have been thoroughly integrated into the process, most of the campaigning should be focused on getting the citizens to the polls (Kelly & Zieper, 2001). Encouraging voter participation can involve a grassroots approach, mailers and flyers, web pages and orchestrated media coverage.

Grassroots approaches of the twenty-first century have also changed. Citizens are less likely to answer the door to their residence, spend time on the phone with a telemarketer, or read mailers that bombard them during a campaign season. The complexity of the voter's needs requires getting the message delivered and comprehended. Understanding this complexity greatly assists getting the measure passed. In Dade County, delivering the message consisted of billboard signs, public service announcements in both English and Spanish, and town hall meetings at the community level affected. On the day of the election, volunteers wore "Vote for My Park!" tee shirts and handed out informative palm cards at the polling stations as the voters arrived (Kelly & Zieper, 2001).

The connection to voters within a given community remains as the critical link to successful communications and as a result, the hopeful passing and implementation of a ballot measure. As previously stated in the Monterey Park case study, the disconnect between the Asian community and the city leader's ability to illustrate their need for an adequate funding

source was the demise of their ballot measure (Orchard, 2004). Creating a partnership within a community must first start with a better understanding of each individual's needs. Public services that consumers choose to support are those that best satisfy their needs. This is why audiences need to be appropriately targeted. Ballot information must be presented in a manner that meets the needs of the reader or listener. To ensure effective communications, material must be specific, sincere and use terminology that is easily understood (Olson, 2002). Targeting teenage voters for example, is significantly different in tone and content from material presented to senior citizens. "The fire department's level of service can only be measured by identifying the needs of the consumer and satisfying them. The only way to find out what those needs are and to satisfy them is to ask that consumer" (Paige, 1990). When Rialto first posed the idea of the UUT to the public it serves, city leaders had already spent time developing partnerships with key community groups. Focus groups were identified and established with senior citizens, community activists, the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

Alan Brunacini (1996) stated, "We have always done the very best we could for our customers, but we haven't spent much time asking them what they really want... simply, we decided what we thought they really needed, delivered that service, and went home." It is this exact paradigm that remains imbedded in each firefighter and for the most part, government employees, alike. Breaking this paradigm will cause personnel to more deeply interact with its constituents, thus creating a closer bond and developing greater trust within each citizen. City administrators need to also recognize the need for strong leaders in key roles.

A creditable leader is one that has integrity, keeps promises, trusts and is trusted. A transformational leader has more interaction between the leader and the follower; a symbiotic relationship is formed (FEMA, 2004). There needs to be a leader that can educate and train the

personnel to the standards that are expected. City Administrator Henry Garcia stated that, “Every worthwhile cause needs a worthwhile leader” (personal communication, February 22, 2005). Training firefighters, police officers, public works employees and other city personnel as organizational leaders is critical. In turn, they will have the ability to directly impact how a citizen perceives the government agency. As a result, fire department personnel and the community functioning as change agents, can then champion the need for additional funding and resources (FEMA, 1998).

Olson (2002), quoting Hsieh and Yang stated, “A fire department has a very intimate relationship with the public because its services affect lives and property. That relationship...must be nurtured and developed over time to be of value to the department and the community.” With the building of this relationship, the fire department members ultimately enhance the quality of the fire-fighting service, thus causing the public to be satisfied with the better protection provided by the local government (Deng, Hsieh, & Yang, 2001).

Getting citizens to participate requires persuasion, which illustrates how it will directly benefit the individual and the community. If the fire department is a high-visibility department, it will survive because the community will know exactly what it does and how well it does it. “The critical resource is access, so the greatest care is given to creating and nurturing networks of people whom they can call on, work with, and engage when addressing the issue at hand” (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

Even though September 11th has heightened public awareness for the need of emergency services on a local level, most citizens still do not believe they will experience a disaster in their lifetime (Wahle, 2004). Building trust and credibility with the citizens that a fire department protects is the one of the largest gaps to bridge. The Fire Chief’s Handbook states, “...forward

movement has not been easy, even though fire departments are rated tops by citizens who have been asked to judge their municipal services and the honesty and ethical standards of people working in various fields” (Compton, 2003). It is difficult for organizations to achieve anything that is community-based without forming partnerships with others who share their vision or have similar missions (Compton). Long approaches, conversations, targeted focus groups, community involvement, trust and accountability are the integral components to a successful partnership with citizens. As a result, this community partnership translates into an improved probability for the successful passage of a tax-based referendum.

Finally, dated though relative information, Koen (1989) states it is important to have the backing and full support of the governing authority. It is equally critical that the elected officials responsible for the delivery of services publicly support the issue. “Less than unanimous support of this group can significantly hamper the campaign efforts of department staff members and volunteers by suggesting to voters that the ballot proposal is not the best alternative or might not be needed” (Koen).

PROCEDURES

Descriptive research methodologies were used in preparation for this Applied Research Project. Additionally, two Feedback Instruments were developed and utilized to evaluate how other California cities marketed their ballot measures and how Rialto citizens voted during a special election. The intent of this research is to explore strategic marketing applications as they apply to municipalities and the fire service and identify stakeholders with a greater understanding of their needs. The end result of this research was recommendations that Rialto could use to: 1) better understand the needs of its constituents and, 2) develop marketing strategies for an upcoming referendum renewal.

A comprehensive literature review began during the author's attendance at the National Fire Academy in August 2004. The review included published research papers by former Executive Fire Officer students, books and trade journals authored by fire service personnel. Subsequent reviews included Internet searches for published materials and websites of government, public safety and affiliated private business associations. Additional research was conducted at California State University, San Bernardino with respect to material from the author's personal library from recent public administration courses. Additional material was also reviewed using the Interlibrary Loan Program, with documents sent to the Crafton Hills College Library in Yucaipa, California. Interviews were conducted with various professionals from the City of Rialto, as well as the consultant utilized during Rialto's 2003 Special Election campaign. These interviews established relative background information to the subject and delivered a personal perspective from the various individuals. The 5th Edition of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual was used as the reference source for citations.

Research Methodology

The Executive Development Student Manual describes descriptive research as, "...the collection of data to answer questions regarding the current status of the subject of the study...including assessing attitudes...and such examples as, identifying public opinion on an upcoming bond issue" (FEMA 2004). While the intent of this author was to collect data related to the present situation occurring in Rialto, some evaluation and analysis was also necessary during the feedback instrument portions to determine past practices in other city referendum marketing attempts and the recent voting practices of area citizens.

Research question #1 was, "What marketing techniques were used in the 2003 Special Election by the City of Rialto?" This question was addressed during the interview portions of

the literature review and provided background information and marketing strategies used during the special election of 2003 in Rialto. Research questions #2 and #3 were answered with the results of the feedback instruments from various California cities, while question #4 and part of #5 were answered with results of feedback instruments from Rialto citizens. The remaining part of question #5 was addressed from the literature review.

Interviews

Non-structured interviews were conducted with Rialto City Administrator Henry Garcia on February 22, 2005, Assistant City Administrator Kirby Warner on March 14, 2005 and Rialto's Chief Finance Officer June Overholt on March 8, 2005. The purpose of the interview with the City Administrator was to gain insight regarding his thought process leading up to the need for the UUT as an alternative revenue generator for Rialto. The purpose of interviewing the Assistant City Administrator was to gather pertinent information regarding the historical perspective that caused the implementation of the ballot measure. Results of these two interviews were summarized in the Background and Significance section of this document. The purpose of the interview with the Chief Finance Officer was to acquire technical data regarding ballot implementation and actual revenue collected and future projections. This information was summarized in the Background and Significance and Results sections of this document.

Fire Chief Steve Wells was interviewed at the Rialto Fire Administration Headquarters on February 2, 2005. His dialogue provided a historical aspect with regards to department cutbacks, layoffs and station closures. He also provided valuable insight regarding leadership and the role the fire department acquired during the past campaign. The result of his interview was also summarized in the Background and Significance section of this document.

An informal personal interview was conducted on March 1, 2005 with Rialto Battalion Chief Mike Peel regarding a paper that he authored titled, “Rialto Ballot Measures J and K.” Chief Peel provided additional background information regarding the fire department’s involvement of the passage of these two measures (M. Peel, personal communication, March 1, 2005). The result of his interview is also summarized in the Background and Significance section of this document.

A telephone interview was conducted with marketing consultant Phil Giarrizzo on April 5, 2005. Mr. Giarrizzo represents Giarrizzo Campaign Consulting and was retained by the “Yes on Measures J and K Committee” as the consultant responsible for marketing Rialto’s ballot measure. The result of his phone interview is found in the Background and Significance section of this document and provided additional background information as well as, broadened this author’s understanding of political campaigning.

Feedback Instrument

Two feedback instruments were developed and targeted two different audiences.

The first consisted of an eleven-question evaluation designed to determine marketing strategies from other California cities that have passed similar referendums. After a phone consultation with the League of California Cities on January 10, 2005, a database was obtained from the League’s website (http://www.uutinfo.org/uutinfo_intro.htm). There were 147 California cities identified as cities that had successfully passed a UUT. During the month of January 2005, each of the 147 cities was sent an email with introductions, directions and the feedback questionnaire electronically formatted and attached. The correspondent was directed to either return the questionnaire via email or facsimile and a fax number was provided. A copy of the city questionnaire feedback instrument can be found in Appendix A.

The second feedback instrument (Appendix B) consisted of a twelve-question evaluation designed to determine voter information from citizens of Rialto. As identified in the Background and Significance section of this document, only 3,377 citizens actually voted during the special election held on June 3, 2003. It became increasingly difficult for this author to determine which resident was a registered voter and which registered voter actually voted during this election. This dilemma is further discussed in the Limitations section of this document. The San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters was contacted on April 18, 2005 and a database of voter contact information for this specific election was purchased by this author from the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters. Due to time constraints, an email and telephone evaluation was conducted of this database of Rialto voters. Of the registered voters, 100 resident voters were contacted and asked to participate in the evaluation.

Of the 147 California cities that were sent a questionnaire, twenty responded either via email or by fax; of the 100 Rialto voters contacted, 40 participated in the phone evaluation. Both of these findings are discussed in the Results section of this document.

Assumptions

Determined early during the literature review research was the fact that superior communication skills are needed in order to effectively reach targeted voting audiences. One assumption this author made was that the readers of this document have an understanding of that need. Learning to develop and improve these communication skills in order to successfully reach the public that it serves was also an assumption.

Another assumption this author made was that the feedback instruments reached their intended audience and the individual that responded was knowledgeable enough in the subject matter to answer the questions.

Finally, it was also assumed that while conducting non-structured interviews with City Administration Executives, their answers were objective and honest to the best of their knowledge.

Limitations

The most significant limitation was time. Thus, data collected during the established time frame was limited and did not allow for expansive research or the use of outside consultants.

The assumption regarding the Feedback Instrument did not always hold true, thereby becoming a limitation. With regards to the 147 surveys that were emailed to the various cities that currently have a UUT, 40 were returned undeliverable and only twenty completed forms were returned. The email addresses were obtained from the League of California Cities website. A limitation identified from the League of California Cities was their database of email contacts. A phone call to this organization established that the last and most current updated list stated, “Spring 2001” (http://www.uutinfo.org/uutinfo_intro.htm retrieved January 10, 2005).

One factor not identified until the surveys were returned, was the fact that many of the cities were not required to have a special election to initiate their particular tax. As previously mentioned in the Background and Significance section of this document, California cities are not able to impose any new taxes without the electorate voting on the measure. Identified in the Feedback Instrument, several of the respondents already had their UUT in place prior to the enactment of California Proposition 218 and therefore, did not require any marketing, consulting or strategizing to place the ballot measure.

The scope of this research was also limited because only cities within California that previously passed a UUT and Rialto citizens that actually voted in the special election were used. This author recognizes that this research poses limited and potentially skewed results. While a variety of user fees are common, the concept of the UUT is somewhat new and its potentials are not widely understood. For that reason, research was limited to California only. Input from cities outside of California would have broadened the scope of the research and possibly provided more comprehensive findings.

The lack of technical expertise by this author in collecting and evaluating electronic records and performing analysis on the returned Feedback Instruments was also limiting. For this reason, this author merely sought to collect and tally data from the various cities and citizens to identify trends with the hope of identifying new marketing ideas.

The final limitation is the author's own bias. Having experienced the financial dilemma of Rialto firsthand, this author understands the critical nature of renewing the UUT. Admittedly, this creates a bias during the Background and Significance, as well as during the Discussion and Recommendations portions of this document.

Terms and Definitions

Utility Users Tax (UUT). - Utility Users Tax revenues are used to pay for essential municipal services such as police, fire, libraries, and roads. In some cities, the UUT provides up to 25% of the city's total revenue. It is a General Fund tax on utilities such as gas, electricity, telephone (including cellular), water and cable television collected by the various utilities for remittance to the particular city.

Special Consolidated Election. – Consolidated election refers to precincts that are home precincts that are temporarily grouped together for a specific election because the voters within

those home precincts will be casting their ballots on the same issues. In Rialto's case, June 3, 2003, Measures J and K were the only ballot measures on the ticket.

Howard Jarvis Tax Association. – The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association is self-proclaimed government watchdog. Their claim is to be dedicated to the protection of Proposition 13 and the advancement of taxpayers' rights including the right to limited taxation, the right to vote on tax increases and the right of economical, equitable and efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

League of California Cities. – The League's vision is to be recognized and respected as the leading advocate for the common interests of California's cities. Its mission is to restore and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy in order to enhance the quality of life for all Californians.

RESULTS

This Applied Research Project started as the result of the City of Rialto desiring to renew its UUT that is set to sunset in 2008. This author attempted to identify two underlying issues that were revealed by the research questions. Therefore, the results of this research are derived from the literature review, the information gained from the Feedback Instruments sent to various California cities and the information obtained from the Feedback Instruments sent to Rialto citizens and personal interviews with key city officials.

Research Question 1:

What marketing techniques were used in the 2003 Special Election by the City of Rialto?

This question was answered through personal interviews with Rialto City Administrator Henry Garcia, Assistant City Administrator Kirby Warner and Rialto Fire Chief Stephen Wells.

Several marketing components occurred on a variety of levels that were almost transparent to city employees outside of the fire department.

An outside marketing consultant, Phil Giarrizzo was hired at the recommendation of the City Administrator to outline and orchestrate a sequence of events that led up to the campaign development. The “Yes on Measures J and K Committee” was established and the Rialto firefighter’s union created a checking account. The local union became the avenue for which donations were received and campaign material was purchased. At the height of the campaign, nearly \$40,000 was generated for the publicity of the measures with only \$400 remaining after the campaign (B. Nelson, personal communication, April 24, 2005).

Town hall meetings, key public speaking events, community forums and targeted audiences shaped informative and open dialogue toward public safety concerns, thus creating an alliance with the City of Rialto officials. One of the targeted audiences included senior citizen groups. It was strategized that seniors were an excellent resource for several reasons. First, seniors are civic-minded and generally supportive of city officials. Secondly, several senior citizens serve on various committees and commissions throughout the city. This created another venue for disseminating information. Finally, numerous senior groups were educated about the senior exemption provision of the ballot measure. This created a nexus between that particular population group potentially needing the added public safety services and not having to pay for the UUT because of their exemption.

Other marketing techniques used by Rialto during the 2003 Special Election included city report cards, mailers, door-to-door and telephone campaigns. The concept of city report cards was the brainstorm of the City Administrator. Mr. Garcia stated during his personal interview

that the city “needs to take a more in-depth role at reaching the community” (personal communication, February 22, 2005).

The report cards were a concerted effort between several departments with the mission of informing the reader of the current state of the City. Chief Financial Officer June Overholt finalized the document. The report card continues to be an effective tool in the post-election time with an accountability of UUT revenues and expenditures. These report cards explain to the citizens exactly where the money was spent. They have proven to be a valuable asset.

Door-to-door and telephone campaigning were utilized as grassroots techniques to further approach additional citizens in attempts to sway more voters. The general employees association, the police and fire unions were used to canvas targeted neighborhoods. The firefighter’s union established itself as the leader of the campaign efforts. Members of all ranks were involved. Distinguishing addresses, mailing flyers, walking precincts, and erecting banners and yard signs made the campaign exceedingly visible.

Research Questions 2 and 3:

To what extent have other fire departments in California used marketing techniques to support a tax-based initiative?

To what extent have other cities in California developed strategies to support a tax-based initiative?

These research questions were answered, in part by literature review of previous identified Applied Research Projects. A search of the online database from the Learning Resource Center at the National Fire Academy showed numerous projects that included tax initiatives, referendums and alternative funding sources. Initially, this author believed these projects to be valuable resources. While they did provide valuable information for the literature

review of this report, most subjects discussed the need for identifying alternative funding sources and the ability to acquire them (Bertrand, 2000; Ennis, 2000; Intartaglio, 1999; Olson, 2002; Watkins, 1998). EFO Candidate Stephen Olson (2002) researched similar questions with similar results. Based on his research, fire departments surrounding the Geneva, Illinois area, “...created a campaign referendum utilizing a citizen-based campaign committee, surveys and focus groups to identify questions and concerns of the voters to improve the informational material...”

Information was limited from the Feedback Instruments that were returned from the cities that participated in the questionnaire. Of the 147 questionnaires sent, 40 were returned as not deliverable with existing emails. Only 20 cities returned the questionnaire as sent. Of the 20 returned, eight cities claimed their UUT was established prior to the passing of Proposition 218. This means the tax only needed an approval from their city council in order to enact the UUT and therefore, did not have the need to market it to the public. A subsequent question raised for those particular cities was concerning their impression on their citizens’ needs. Further examination regarding this perception occurred in the Discussion section of the report. Twelve cities stated they used some form of marketing techniques to support a ballot initiative campaign. Town hall meetings, public forums and door-to-door campaigning were used 42% (5) of the time; mailers, flyers and banners were used 50% (6) of the time and public access media was used 25% (3) of the time. Of the 12 cities that returned questionnaires, 50% (6) stated that departments within the city, other than administration and council, assisted with the referendum campaign. Only one of the returned questionnaires (City of Colton) stated that the fire department assisted with the campaign. The police department appeared to be the lead

department with the greatest campaign assistance. The reason for the police department leading the campaign was not identified.

Research Question 4:

Why did Rialto citizens vote the way they did in Measures J and K in 2003?

As mentioned in the Background and Significance section of this report, Measure J was the advisement to the City by the voters on how to specifically spend the funds, while Measure K was the enactment, thus establishing the UUT. Equally confounding was the actual voting results. With nearly 100,000 Rialto residents and almost 28,000 registered voters, it was hard to believe that only 3,300 people voted during this special election. Was it because this special election was not publicized? Not likely. This election had nearly \$40,000 generated and spent for campaign efforts to support J and K. As illustrated in the first research question, flyers, mailers, banners and yard signs were visible everywhere in the city. Did the voters understand the measures as written? The language appeared to be clear, concise and unmistakable. Or even more simply, did merely five more voters understand the need for the UUT and therefore voted in favor of the tax? These were some of the questions that the author hoped to identify.

The twelve-question evaluation questioned random Rialto residents in efforts to determine why they voted the way they did. The questionnaire was emailed and phoned to a variety of citizens requesting input. Of the 100 residents contacted, 40 agreed to participate in the evaluation. Of the 40 participants, all 40 voted in the June 3, 2003 Special Election. As previously stated, the database of voters used was obtained from the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters. 92.5% (37) stated they understood both measures as presented on the ballot. Five people were able to remember how the ballot was worded when questioned. 80% (32) stated they voted yes for both measures. Each of these yes votes felt they were supporting the

city's need for a locally controlled funding source. 15% (6) voted no for both measures. One respondent wishing to remain anonymous stated that she voted no because she was unwilling to, "give the police department any more money" (Anonymous, personal communication, April 24, 2005). 5% (2) stated that they voted yes for Measure J (spending areas), but voted no for Measure K (enactment) and did not offer an explanation. Future research could possibly identify whether voters that split their vote clearly understood the measures. Regarding marketing techniques, one person (2.5%) stated she attended a town hall meeting in the Las Colinas District of Rialto and as a result, voted yes. All 40 respondents (100%) stated they saw some form of campaign advertisement, such as banners, yard signs, posters or mailers. When respondents were asked if someone talked to them during a door-to-door campaign, zero (0%) stated they talked to someone regarding the ballot measures.

Research Question 5:

What would encourage Rialto citizens to vote yes on the ballot renewal in June 2008?

When the forty respondents were asked if they would vote yes on the renewal measure, 70% (28) stated they would; 12.5% (5) stated they would not vote for the renewal and 17.5% (7) stated they were unsure how they will vote. The 12 remaining "no" and "unsure" voters were asked a follow-up question.

1. What might the City do to encourage you to vote yes on the renewal measure?

Each of the 12 respondents had open dialogue with this author regarding things the City could do to convince them to vote yes. Each stated the importance to show where the money has been spent. Suggestions included a city report card, frequent updates on the City's website, posted information on the public access cable network and press releases. One respondent stated that he "saw and heard the new fire truck around his neighborhood," (R. Aguilera, personal

communication. April 24, 2005) “and was happy that he could see where his money went.”

Another respondent stated that it was vitally important for the City to have open, honest and accountable communication with its citizens. These citizen suggestions could exemplify the successful passage of a referendum renewal.

Assistant City Administrator Kirby Warner stated in a personal interview that in order to combat the possibility of community mistrust, city personnel must be directly accountable to the citizens (personal communication, March 14, 2005). Frank conversations, targeted focus groups, community involvement, trust and accountability are the integral components to a successful partnership with its citizens.

DISCUSSION

Throughout this report two assertions were explored and developed. First, in order to develop marketing strategies in effort to persuade and convince people to vote a certain way, one must effectively understand the needs and desires of the affected audience. Secondly, once those needs are determined, a concerted, articulated effort to establish a nexus between those perceived needs and the true fundamental needs must be orchestrated not only by the organizational leaders, but by all stakeholders involved.

As identified by the Monterey Park, California case study (Orchard, 2004), it is difficult to reach into an isolated community and determine why a particular group of citizens did not make the connection between the need for increased funding through the passing of a particular ballot measure and their own fundamental needs. Whether it was cultural or financial reasons, Monterey Park officials could not successfully establish a separate funding source for public safety.

At the onset of this research, this author desired to establish connections with key groups within the City of Rialto to gain an understanding as to why they voted the way they did. Did they understand, or make the connection as to why Rialto needed an alternative funding source separate and isolated from the State of California takeaways? Approximately half of the voter turnout in June of 2003 did make that connection. However, it is also safe to assume that the remaining half did not.

City Administrator Henry Garcia stated that knowing the audience was difficult and needed an active approach to connect with them. He further stated that mailers, flyers and banners are passive and a shotgun approach (H. Garcia, personal communication, February 22, 2005). While it is understood that this approach is passive, it is still a necessary visual way to place the information before the voters. “In order for a public to see and remember the issue at hand, the campaign material must be placed before its recipient six different times” (P. Giarrizzo, personal communication, April 5, 2005).

Another medium for dissemination of public information is the City’s website. City documents, department report cards, financial statements and specific UUT illustrations with PowerPoint displays are always available and updated frequently. While probably limited to computer and web-minded people only, this could still prove to be a valuable tool that very few other cities have utilized regarding their UUT. One can log onto the City’s website at any given time and see exactly where their UUT money has been spent (J. Overholt, personal communication, March 3, 2005). Quite possibly viewed as a critically positive tool in the post-election era, the updated website regarding UUT revenues and expenditures also shows accountability, follow-through and legitimacy on the part of the City.

Making the connection between the citizens that voted for the UUT and the City's fiduciary responsibility of spending revenue correctly is another important aspect of creating trust within the community. Kirby Warner, Assistant City Administrator (personal communication, March 14, 2005), reinforced that the public will "always be questioning and watching to see what we are doing with the money." The public never blindly trusts government. Building support means meeting the public on their turf and in their individual circumstances (Orchard, 2004). When clear and open communications occur, relationships are built that boast strong alliances that can endure financial difficulties.

Marketing strategies take on a new meaning when the voters' needs and concerns are accounted and incorporated. The garnered support gained from incorporating their underlying needs creates several positive results. First, a voter that posts an affirming vote, sides with the City and in this case, understands there is a need for alternative funding that is locally controlled. Secondly, this partnership with each voter and the City now leads a cause to influence other potential voters. Finally, and most importantly, the group of voters now understands, supports and affirms decisions and policies set by the government – in this case, the City of Rialto. Credibility is established with the citizen coalition and together a rapport and relationship is nurtured. And in turn, this nurtured coalition can influence additional groups.

It is equally important to remember that stakeholders include all affected. This means businesses, residents, city employees and the city leaders, as well. It is the responsibility of the leaders to step back and include all stakeholders. Sometimes gaining the support of the employees is harder than winning over the citizens they serve. Establishing credibility among the troops is just as critical as dealing with the public. It is important that all employees understand that as stakeholders, they potentially are the vital link between the service provided

and the public they serve. Every opportunity to enhance their public contact could prove beneficial, as well. If an employee does not embrace the leadership's vision, inevitably the public will sense that and relationships will fracture and fail. Thus it is ultimately important that the organization demonstrates to all stakeholders how every service provided benefits the community served.

It is the responsibility of the leadership to communicate with its stakeholders. As previously mentioned, this includes employees and citizens, alike. Transformational leadership is credible, confident, creative, principled and visionary (FEMA, 2004). All of these attributes must be enacted in order for any leader to move the organization forward. Positioning equally between the elected officials, the administration and the citizens requires what Heifetz and Linsky (2002) liken to "moving between the dance floor and the balcony." It is necessary to dance and interact with all these groups. It is also necessary to remove oneself from the dance floor and move to the balcony so that clarity can occur. If one stays too close to the issue, such as Rialto desperately needing to reaffirm its UUT, clarity is not achieved as to the precise needs to support such a measure. Repositioning oneself to the balcony allows an overview of the public, the employees and all stakeholders on the dance floor together. Momentarily positioning oneself on the balcony is advantageous; becoming a permanent fixture on the balcony would be detrimental.

Heifetz and Linsky (2002) also emphasized that "orchestrating the conflict may be easier to do when you are in an authority role because people expect those in authority to manage the process." Thus, placing that authority figure in the public eye is essential to the success of the initiative, as well as, promoting the value of all stakeholders. "The challenge of leadership... is to work with the differences, passions and conflicts in a way that diminishes their destructive

potential and constructively harnesses their energy” (Heifetz & Linsky). Understanding the fears and needs of the various stakeholders ensures building trust among the community, the politicians and the employees. This combined energy with the orchestrated help of a visionary leader can effectively promote a positive outcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this research, the potential exists for initiating the following recommendations to the Command Staff of the Rialto Fire Department, its employees, the City Administrator and other municipalities in similar circumstances.

- Based on the feedback results from other California cities, the City of Rialto should begin various forms of public contact, such as, town hall meetings, focus groups, a citizen advisory committee and budget advisory committee.
- Based on personal interviews and research, Rialto should develop various forms of educational and informative material regarding the current status of the UUT. Some examples include: frequent updates to the City’s website, press releases, and media interviews with prominent City leaders.
- Based on literature review, Rialto leaders should garner community involvement and relationship building. As established in the Literature Review, developing these relationships were essential to successful passage of various ballot measures. Renewing them would enhance established relations.
- The Rialto Fire Chief and Police Chief should present themselves before numerous community events and City functions. As mentioned in the Literature Review, just the mere presence of these key figureheads promotes credence among the diverse audiences.

- California regulations restrict government bodies from asking voters to vote a particular way. However, prominent leaders, as well as, all city employees may provide statistical data regarding the UUT measures as informational literature. It is recommended that all city employees become well versed regarding UUT information and statistics.
- Rialto should create and display multimedia videos including interviews of prominent City leaders on its public access cable programming. This will reinforce strong leadership backing and place the statistical information regarding the ballots before the voters frequently. Viewing such commercials on public access cable would require less effort on the viewer's part than possibly reading brochures.
- All City employees, including the Fire Department must fully support the measures, the information presented and become personally involved in campaign activities.
- The Fire Chief and the Police Chief need to continue open dialogue with its respective employee associations and unions. The Unions must understand the cooperative efforts needed to support the renewal of such initiatives.
- Building community relations includes understanding specific needs and desires of these groups. It is further recommended that the City perform follow-up surveys in attempt to identify and understand their needs.
- Update Feedback Instruments from the responding California cities. Email addresses and telephone numbers for contacts become outdated as those employees move to different positions.
- Work in conjunction with the California League of Cities in effort to support campaign strategies and informational efforts.

The benefit to implementing these recommendations is achieving the end result and the premise of this research project. Ultimately passing the Rialto Utility Users Tax when it is presented back to the voters for renewal is the primary purpose of developing additional campaign strategies. “The future of the Fire Service is...driven by changes in society. These changes include new expectations of the citizens..., greater accountability of public resources and improving overall efficiency...” (FEMA 1998). Educating the citizens, while attempting to understand their concerns, will help to develop a nexus as to why the UUT should be renewed and remain in effect.

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APPENDIX A

CITY UTILITY USERS TAX QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What year did you first establish a Utility Users Tax? ☐ Yes ☐ No Comments:
2. What is the percentage rate of your Utility Users Tax?
3. Did it pass the first time? ☐ Yes ☐ No Comments:
4. If not, when did you return the measure to the voters? ☐ Next Election Longer? _____
5. Was this a renewal ballot measure? ☐ Yes ☐ No Comments:
6. How many times has your Utility Users Tax renewed? _____
7. Does your Utility Users Tax have a sunset clause? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, how long to sunset? _____
8. To what extent did your city employ marketing techniques to support the passage of your Utility Users Tax? ☐ Public Access/Cable TV Ads ☐ Newspaper articles/ads
☐ Community presentations ☐ Town hall/open forums ☐ Mailers/flyers
☐ Door to door campaigning ☐ Yard signs ☐ Telephone campaigning/survey of registered voters ☐ Targeting key voters, such as seniors, business groups and/or community activists Comments:
9. Which departments were actively involved in the campaign?
☐ Fire ☐ Police ☐ Admin ☐ RDA ☐ Chamber ☐ Other
10. In your opinion, which marketing techniques were the most effective?
☐ Public Access/Cable TV Ads ☐ Newspaper articles/ads ☐ Community presentations
☐ Town hall/open forums ☐ Mailers/flyers ☐ Door to door campaigning
☐ Yard signs ☐ Telephone campaigning/survey of registered voters
☐ Targeting key voters, such as seniors, business groups and/or community activists
Comments:
11. What was the estimated campaign funds expended during the UUT ballot measure? N/A
☐ Less than \$10,000 ☐ \$10,000-20,000 ☐ \$20,000-\$40,000 ☐ Over \$40,000

Please attach this questionnaire to your email and forward to mwatson@confire.org or fax to

(909) 421-0824, attn: Battalion Chief Mike Watson

APPENDIX B

RIALTO CITIZEN VOTER QUESTIONNAIRE

Did you vote in the June 2003 Special Election for Measure J and K (Utility Users Tax)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you did **not** vote, why?

☐ Did not know there was an election ☐ Not informed/did not understand the measures

☐ Not interested in the ballot measures ☐ Time constraints ☐ Other _____

Did you vote in favor of Measure J, creating a Utility Users Tax?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you vote in favor of Measure K, authorizing the City to spend the tax on Police and Fire protection?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you voted in favor of the measures, what campaign material(s) influenced you the most?

☐ Public Access/Cable TV Ads ☐ Newspaper articles/ads ☐ Community presentations

☐ Town hall/open forums ☐ Mailers/flyers ☐ Door to door campaigning ☐ Yard signs

☐ City official explaining the measures

What factors influenced you to vote **in favor** of the Utility Users Tax?

☐ Knowing it would expire (sunset) in 5 years ☐ Stabilize City Finances

☐ Increase police protection ☐ Increase fire protection ☐ Other _____

What factors influenced you to vote **against** the measures, **not approving** the Utility Users Tax?

☐ Did not want a new tax ☐ Thought 8% was too high ☐ Did not understand measures

☐ Did not trust that City officials would spend it they way they promised

☐ Other _____

If you voted Yes on one measure and No on the other measure -

What factors influenced you to vote in favor of one and against the other measure?

☐ Did not want a new tax ☐ Thought 8% was too high ☐ Did not understand measures

☐ Did not want the tax, but wanted the City to increase Police and Fire protection

☐ Other _____

Do you plan to vote in favor of the ballot renewal in 2008?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would your vote change if you know that vital city services would be reduced if the UUT did not renew?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you be willing to discuss your decision with a City Official?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide contact
information: _____

Please attach this questionnaire to your email and forward to mwatson@confire.org or fax to
(909) 421-0824, attn: Battalion Chief Mike Watson.